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France since her birth-rate has fallen below her death-rate. On the same grounds we can well despair of many of our churches, for were it not for new members by letter they would soon die out as some families do. The church

and its ministry must make evangelistic effort, or not only miss its calling but also soon completely perish from off the earth. For selfish as well as altruistic reasons such effort must be made.

A PLEA FOR RELIGIOUS MONISM

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Modern religion is an inheritance. If our religion had not been handed down to us we would have created instinctively some form of religion for ourselves, but our religion has a well-recognized continuity with antiquity. It has its roots in the remote past. Christianity is founded upon Judaism; Judaism upon Yahwehism; Yahwehism upon the animism of the primitive Semites. Historically the Arabian religion is the source of our present-day ethical monotheism. Of course during each transition new elements were added and obsolete elements eliminated, so that the form of the final development differs greatly from the original rudimentary conceptions of the desert nomads; but, nevertheless, there are also the persistent strands which reach from the beginning to the end, certain universals which remain constant throughout the whole process of growth and change—else our modern religion could not be said to belong to this particular family of religion, namely, the Semitic animism.

I propose to challenge the validity of one of these ancient survivals, and

that is the differentiation of matter and spirit. This distinction, persisting today under the common dualism of the material and the spiritual, which is synchronous with the whole process of development and progress, may be said in fact to constitute the initial source of our own system, or family, of religion. Today we popularly think in terms of body and soul, by which we assume the mutual exclusiveness of body and spirit, and this numerical differentiation dominates in the length and breadth of theology. We plainly think and speak as though matter and spirit represented two co-ordinate realities, and, consequently, this dualism remains the basic assumption in religious thought.

Such, in fact, is the animistic heritage of Christian monotheism. In the pre-Canaanite days of Israel the primitive Semites conceived religion under this distinction; they separated consciousness from the body as a distinct ethereal entity in itself. The naïve-thinking Semite, looking upon the world at large from the standpoint of his own dual conception of the self, perceived the

whole world of natural phenomena as like himself, i.e., a duality of matter and spirit. Things, material objects, tangible reals, like his own nature, were subject to the inflation and possession of spirit being. Originating in the experience of swoon, trance, dream, fever, ecstasy, and similar nervous excitements in which the body seemed to be either inflated or deflated by the inward or outward rush of the ethereal being, invisible and yet perceptible like the wind, the person becoming either exalted and excited or quite the opposite through this extreme emotional influence, being tossed about in a frenzy of madness or delirium or, on the other hand, collapsing like a balloon when the air is violently expelled, the Semite became endued with the notion of spirit substance independent of, and more powerful than, material and tangible things. Interpreting thus their own emotional experience as states of spirit possession, they analogously attributed this view of the person to all natural phenomena that manifested life and, accordingly, nature at large in innumerable ways became animated by, and subject to, spirit. This transcendental being they named "spirit," or "wind," after the likeness of the actual wind. Their understanding was aided by the mystery of breath. As a result the heavenly bodies, the clouds, the storm, the mountains, rivers, springs, trees, stones, particularly fertile spots, animals, men, all things in fact which excited curiosity concerning their movement or life, or their influence, were subject to the residence or possession of a spirit, and this possession or abiding constituted the sacredness ("holiness") of the thing or place. So much is too

well known to need amplification here. My point, however, is this: If this rudimentary notion of spirit is the direct source of our present system of religious dualism, should not this corrupting taint of animism be removed entirely from our developed theology wherever its survival still persists? In other words, such a false notion of spirit cannot supply the proper foundation for any true understanding of the religion we possess today.

It is not difficult to see how animism grew into henotheism or monolatry, as the spirits became naturally classified or graded according to their respective powers, or became exclusively associated with particular clans or tribes or nations; how polytheism developed to monotheism according to a systematic hierarchy of deities, relative to the conquering cities; how, at length, moral universals refined the ideal of God to the dominating ethical monotheism of today. But unfortunately the ultimate form of religion never relinquished the primitive dualism of the earliest Semitic conception. It was matter and spirit still, although under a refined and purified conception of the spiritual. One dualism, therefore, persisted to the end.

It is this religious dualism which ought to be challenged today on the ground that in perpetuating an outworn religious notion it obscures the truth and makes increasingly difficult all modern attempts to restate theology in terms of present-day thought. This crude notion of ethereal spirit, independent of material bodies, has no foundation in fact; and consequently the dualism of spirit and matter is false to

reality. For we today have long surrendered the idea that consciousness is a thing in itself which rushes into or out of us; nor can this animistic view of ourselves be adjusted to the facts of our inner life which have been ascertained. It is not true that consciousness is a spirit which inhabits us, soothing or exciting the body at will. Consciousness cannot claim a separate entity from the physical. Whatever our notion of the inner life may be, we no longer hypostatize it apart from the body, i.e., we no longer believe in ghosts. When we soar away in thought or wander in dreams we realize clearly enough not to take such ideas literally. We are able to limit our mental aberrations. In brief our conception of consciousness is monistic. The old dual notion of soul and body may hold as a logical distinction, but not in reality. The identity of matter and spirit is mystery, but their oneness is the reality. This is what makes modern psychology materialistic. But the material is not the antithesis of the spiritual; both coalesce when the plane of life is pure and high. When the material lies at a low level, we reckon it as less spiritual; when high, the spiritual and material are one. The spiritual is a matter of value simply.

Why, then, since we must insist today upon the essential unity of matter and spirit as one reality, should we not, following the Semitic line of logic, look upon life and the world at large as monistic like ourselves? Why should we not deliberately free our mode of thought from the elementary error of religious dualism and restate and reconstruct our logic of God and religion in

monistic terms? Unless we do so we shall continue to graft our better and truer ideas upon a parent stem which is no longer worthy of cultivation. We must refuse to think longer in dualistic terms, but subscribe thoroughly to a religious monism.

There are, to be sure, great difficulties to be overcome in doing this because almost all our traditional forms of religious thought have been shaped and hardened in the dualistic opposition of matter and spirit, but the time is ripe for departure, and religion only needs the quickening touch of fresh truth to be kindled once more in all its sacred power. This new approach to religious reality must be through monism, through a clear insight into the truth that the spiritual and the material are not two divided and separate entities but, on the contrary, constitute one reality. This unity is the supreme truth in religion.

The point of departure for a thoroughgoing religious monism will be from the absolute view of the soul: not matter and spirit in relation simply, but one reality, rather than two, in which the identification of the material and the spiritual is the essential thing. We shall no longer think of that as "holy" by virtue of its separation from the material, but the material which is full of spiritual value will constitute our maturer conception of what holiness is. Such a fresh beginning will necessarily revolutionize most of the present theology which hitherto has been derived from, and has extended, the false dualistic principle.

Let me briefly enumerate some of the more important changes that will take

place in the logic of religion under the monistic conception of matter-spirit reality. Nothing more than a suggestive outline is here attempted.

In the first place the emphasis will be laid upon divine immanence rather than upon transcendence. The latter will naturally be relative to the former, not parallel or antithetical to it; that is to say, the divine transcendence will simply qualify the immanence—the reverse, however, is not proportionately true. The monistic view must put the immanence first as the essential idea, and yet at the same time qualify this identity of God with creation by the notion of transcendence, to escape the confusion of pantheism. These two truths will no longer be dualistically conceived as though on the same plane, but will be so closely drawn together that their point of unity will receive the emphasis. God's immanence in the universe is the fundamental truth, while His transcendence is relegated to the sphere of spiritual value.

Second, the monistic theology will accent the numerical absoluteness of human nature. God and man will no longer be placed side by side and religion defined as their relation, but this dualistic conception must give way to the inwardization of the divine in man. The picture of human nature drawn in Gen. 2:7, although naïvely described in terms of the primitive dualism, presents, nevertheless, the true notion of the absolute man, namely, as a "living soul," i.e., an absolute of matter and spirit in unity. God is thus an integral part of man. Opposed to this identity of matter and spirit is the traditional dualism of God on one side and man on the other which

falls short of the more correct monistic truth.

The monistic view conceives God as in the universe and essentially one with it, but not of it in the sense that God is not always logically prior to creation. In the Christian doctrine of the incarnation the unity of the divine and human is presented in its most absolute form. The point, however, is that general human imperfection in the moral realm does not necessitate a dualistic position. Whatever difficulties this primary oneness of God and man creates for theology constitute the peculiar problem of the atonement.

But, then, we are always beset with the logical difficulties of sin. Our theological troubles are not alleviated by the dualistic conception; they are rather increased thereby. The nice problem of sin proceeds from the fundamental unity of God and man. The answer to this must proceed from the monistic standpoint however great the difficulties of the problem may be. We cannot begin with sin and work backward with any degree of success—that is one of the old ways; we must start with a correct view of human nature, a material-spiritual absolute, and think forward toward the mystery of sin. Whatever the final definition of sin becomes through this process of reasoning, it has the advantage of being subsequent to a proper realization of the nature of the self. By placing facts always before theories we guarantee at least a measure of truth to the theory.

This thought leads to the sacramental system of the church. This has been the very citadel of dualism. But I venture to suggest that the ancient

dualistic defenses of the reality of grace have become more a weakness than a strength in our day. The power of spiritual life will be the better revived and generated on a monistic basis than on the double ground of a divorced terminology of spirit and matter. Much of the "hardness" of the truth of real communion with God and belief in a life-giving nourishment of divine grace is due to misconceptions inherent in the traditional dualism. Once this view is forsaken for the more natural and simpler one of monism the way becomes clear for a more practical realization of the truth that man cannot live by bread alone, i.e., the solely material food, but only through the nourishment of the material-spiritual food can true life be generated within his being. Materialism exclusive of spiritual significance and value and likewise spirituality exclusive of practical material connection and application are both fatal limitations to the eternal life. The synthesis is the important thing.

Under the dualistic system this spiritual supply of new life is received from a source wholly without human nature and essentially separate from it; which amounts to saying that a man may live upon pure spirituality, upon the extra material, upon the altogether supernatural. The insoluble difficulty with this view is the plain fact that there is no absolutely spiritual substance, no extra-material reality, no spiritual values unattached to, and independent of, the actual tangible and living reals. God himself is not exclusive of creation in any sort of deistic fashion. Grace, then, can only be obtained through the material itself—a conclusion inevitable

under the monistic system of thought. To understand grace as something apart from material reality is a relic of the outworn animism. Consequently we are obliged to proceed along this line of definition though the heavens fall. Grace cannot be wholly distinct in essence from human nature, and accordingly must be specifically a material-spiritual real. That is to say, grace is exactly the material on the very highest spiritual plane, or, as we may put it, the most godly human nature. However, grace does come to us from without in the sense that spiritual values are transcendently without until generated within. The function of faith in this regard is to assist rather than create grace in the process of the sacramental entelechy.

Another change inevitable under the monistic premise is the close identity of morality and religion. These two spheres of life have been more or less exclusive in most of the systems of religion and ethics that have been constructed, and in practical life they have been at best only indifferently related. One of the striking features of modern activity is the social service uninspired by distinctive religion and, on the other hand, the sanctuary religion too far abstracted from actual social application. Such results are outcomes of uncritical and unreal differentiations between moral and spiritual life. Monism alone can remedy this. True morality, or right willing, is wholly identical with religion and, likewise, religion that does not know right from wrong in the most minute details of conscience cannot longer be held to be valid religion. The full truth is apprehended only

through the ever-increasing realization of the identity of religion and morals. It may be that religion is the larger sphere and inclusive of morality so that all moral life must be religious. At any rate we need to understand more perfectly that wherever true moral life is exhibited in the world there exactly is manifested a vital religious power. We must draw then more closely together these two spheres of life so that in their perfect union the most abundant life may be achieved.

I have thus tried to do justice to Christian fundamentals upon a monistic basis. One cannot foresee to what end this course of thinking may lead or what the general outcome may be. But there would seem to be hope for modern

thought here. Religion must be brought more conspicuously to the front in these days than is possible under the handicap of animistic survivals. It may be that a general overhauling of our time-honored but hard-pressed conceptions of matter and spirit is needed and, when accomplished, will tend to line up more harmoniously traditional religious thought with the more recent scientific attitude. The foregoing suggestions have been made in a spirit of reconstruction rather than from an unsympathetic or hostile attitude toward the substantial verities of the Christian faith; and if by emphasizing the unity of material and spiritual life we can generate a larger stock of spiritual values in the world, then in God's name let us try.

THE PROPHETS AS INTERNATIONALISTS

ISAIAH. I

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In his stern call for justice Amos had broken the barriers of a merely national religion. The sovereign mind of Isaiah carried the universalizing process still farther. At the outset of his ministry he had seen the vision of Yahweh as a great King seated on His throne high and lifted up, the radiance of His glory filling the whole earth, and angelic beings surrounding the throne, floating before His presence on the wings

of reverence and purity, while with other twain they sped on His divine commissions "o'er land and ocean without rest." And he was led by the logic of history to unfold the vision to its fullest possible extent.

The earlier prophecies of Isaiah are confined to Judah. For his immediate task was to convert the nation into a true Kingdom of the Holy One. But Judah was soon involved in the sweep of inter-